Skills Demand

Production Occupations

January 2026

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Employers request a variety of skills from job applicants. Some skills are termed as durable, or soft skills, such as *communication, time management, emotional intelligence,* or *customer service*. Other skills are considered technical or hard skills, such as *machinery, tools, blueprinting*, or *mathematics*. This brief explores skills requested by employers in their job postings for *Production* occupations, and how the demand for these skills has changed over the last five years. Learning about in-demand skills helps the potential workforce prepare for skills of today and may identify emerging trends for the future. It also helps ensure employers have the pool of talent they need to address increasing global competition and changing business needs.

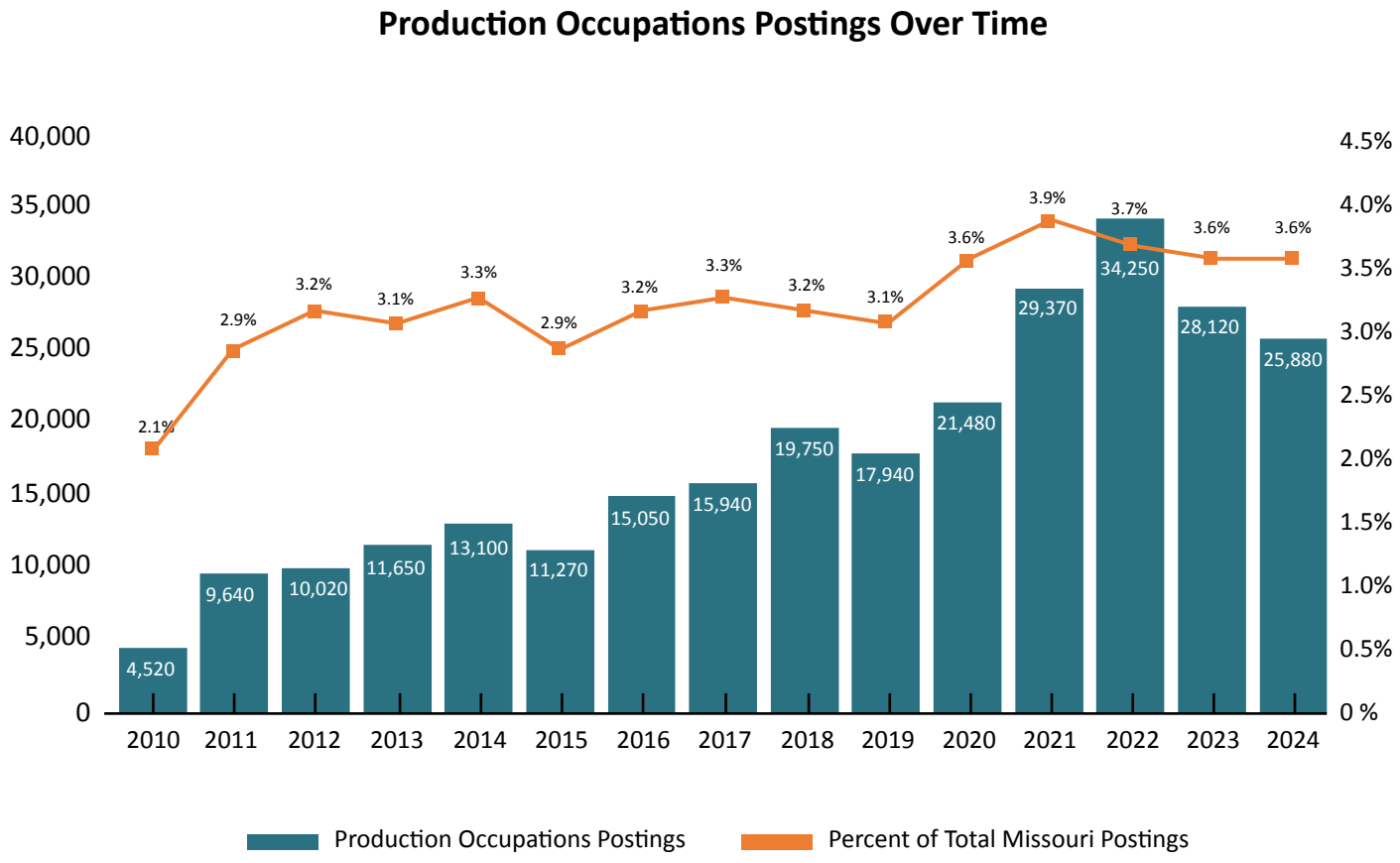
In 2024, there were over 25,880 online job postings for *Production* occupations in Missouri, a 45 percent increase from approximately 17,820 postings in 2019. The following table shows top skills requested in *Production* job postings in 2024, and how demand for those skills compared to the demand in 2019. Top requested skills in both years were *Communication, Operations*, and *Detailed Oriented*.

Production Occupations Top Requested Skills 2024				
Skill or Qualification	**Online Job Postings 2024**	**Percent of Production Postings 2024**	**Online Job Postings 2019**	**Percent of Production Postings 2019**
Communication	6,430	24.9%	3,950	22.2%
Operations	5,850	22.6%	3,800	21.3%
Detail Oriented	5,290	20.4%	2,760	15.5%
Management	4,530	17.5%	3,030	17.0%
Lifting Ability	4,270	16.5%	3,040	17.1%
Customer Service	3,330	12.9%	2,380	13.4%
Troubleshooting	3,300	12.8%	1,540	8.6%
Problem Solving	3,080	11.9%	1,550	8.7%
Packaging & Labeling	3,060	11.8%	2,260	12.7%
Machinery	3,030	11.7%	1,500	8.4%
Total Production Postings	**25,880**		**17,820**	

Source: Lightcast™

Skills Demand Over Time

The number of postings for *Production* occupations increased through 2022, then declined in 2023 and 2024. This follows a statewide trend of a larger number of job postings in 2022 compared to preceding and subsequent years. Job postings across all occupations increased 23 percent from 2021 to 2022, then declined in 2023 and 2024. The ratio of *Production* postings compared to total Missouri postings has increased over time. In 2010, *Production* postings made up 2.1 percent of total postings. The ratio of *Production* postings to total Missouri postings peaked at 3.9 percent in 2021 and has decreased slightly to 3.6 percent in 2023 and 2024.



While the demand for some skills has remained relatively stable over time, demand for others increased or decreased in frequency. Looking at the ratio of skills requested in job postings can help identify which skills are increasing or decreasing in demand.

The percentage of *Production* online job postings requesting an applicant be *Detail Oriented* increased five percentage points from 2019 to 2024. Other skills that increased in demand included *Troubleshooting* (4.1 percentage points), *Machinery* (3.3 percentage points), and *Problem Solving* (3.2 percentage points).

Top Increasing Skills in Production Occupations Postings						
Skill or Qualification	**Online Job Postings 2024**	**Percent of Postings 2024**	**Online Job Postings 2019**	**Percent of Postings 2019**	**Percentage Point Difference 2019-2024**	**Numeric Difference 2019-2024**
Detail Oriented	5,290	20.4%	2,760	15.5%	5.0%	2,530
Troubleshooting	3,300	12.8%	1,540	8.6%	4.1%	1,760
Machinery	3,030	11.7%	1,500	8.4%	3.3%	1,530
Problem Solving	3,080	11.9%	1,550	8.7%	3.2%	1,530
Quality Control	2,350	9.1%	1,080	6.1%	3.0%	1,270
Communication	6,430	24.9%	3,950	22.2%	2.7%	2,480
Hand Tools	2,640	10.2%	1,370	7.7%	2.5%	1,270
Blueprinting	1,480	5.7%	590	3.3%	2.4%	890
General Mathematics	2,460	9.5%	1,300	7.3%	2.2%	1,160
Time Management	1,450	5.6%	610	3.4%	2.2%	840
Total Production Postings	**25,880**		**17,820**			

Source: Lightcast™

The ratio of postings requesting *Selling Techniques* decreased 1.3 percentage points from 2019 to 2024. Sales skills were mostly requested in job postings for *Bakers; Butchers and Meat Cutters;* and *Tailors*, *Dressmakers*, *and Custom Sewers.*

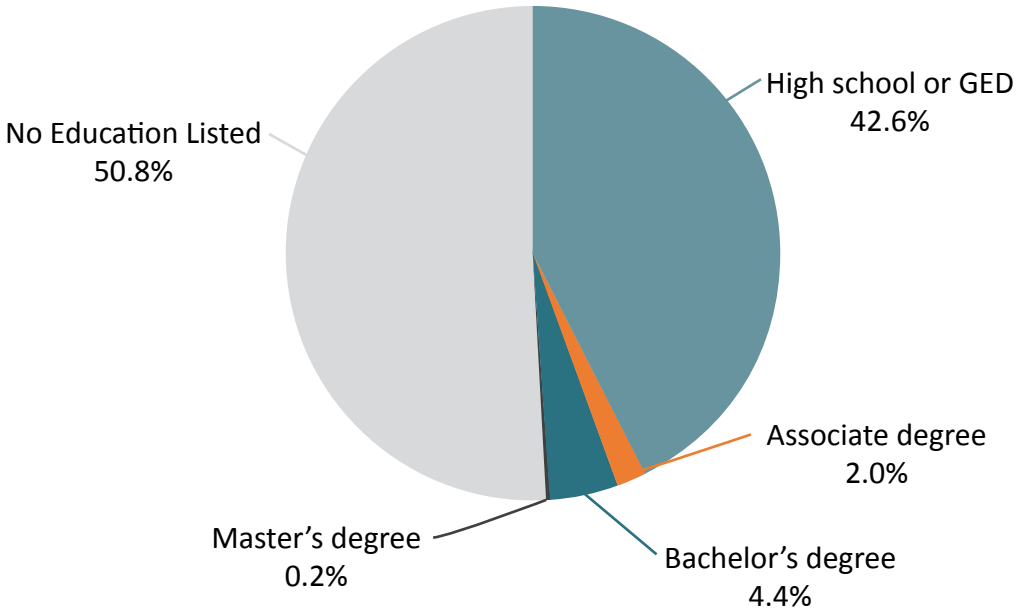
Top Decreasing Skills in Production Occupations Postings						
Skill or Qualification	**Online Job Postings 2024**	**Percent of Postings 2024**	**Online Job Postings 2019**	**Percent of Postings 2019**	**Percentage Point Difference 2019-2024**	**Numeric Difference 2019-2024**
Selling Techniques	240	0.9%	390	2.2%	-1.3%	-150
Safety Assurance	730	2.8%	690	3.9%	-1.1%	40
Breads	60	0.2%	200	1.1%	-0.9%	-140
Packaging & Labeling	3,060	11.8%	2,260	12.7%	-0.9%	800
Statistical Process Controls	220	0.9%	300	1.7%	-0.8%	-80
Enthusiasm	140	0.5%	230	1.3%	-0.7%	-90
Loading & Unloading	1,060	4.1%	860	4.8%	-0.7%	200
Tactfulness	140	0.5%	220	1.2%	-0.7%	-80
Diplomacy	40	0.2%	150	0.8%	-0.7%	-110
Sales	1,130	4.4%	900	5.1%	-0.7%	230
Total Production Postings	**25,880**		**17,820**			

Source: Lightcast™

Education and Experience

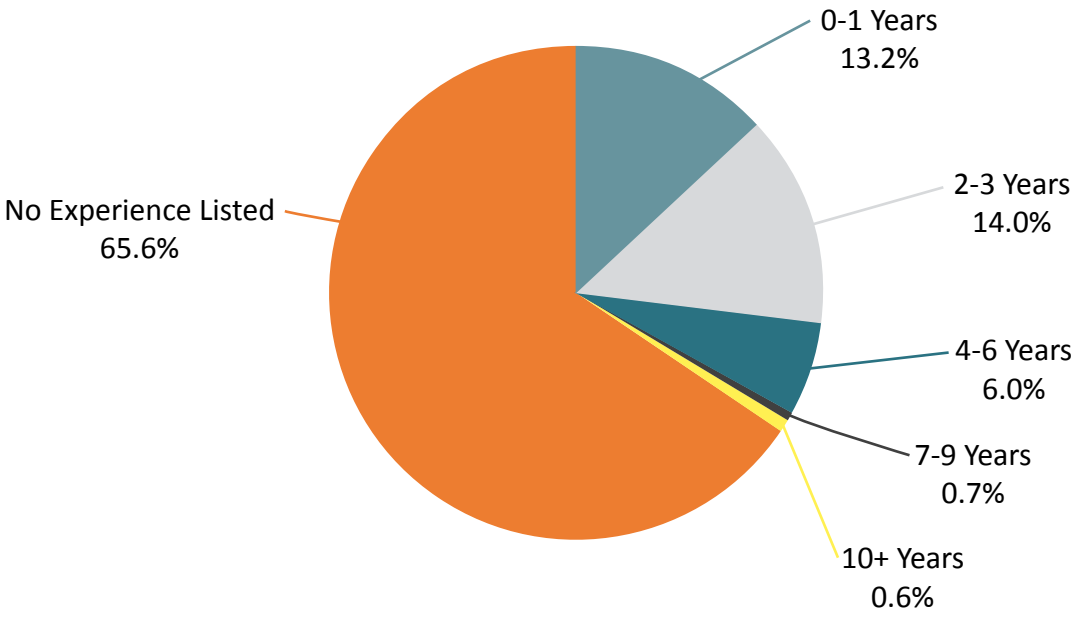
In 2024, 50.8 percent of *Production* job postings did not list an education requirement while 42.6 percent postings requested a high school diploma or GED. Most job postings (65.6%) did not list any minimum experience requirement, 13.2 percent requested 0-1 years' experience, and 14.0 percent requested 2-3 years' experience. This indicates there are many opportunities for entry-level employment within this occupation group.

Minimum Education Level Requested in 2024 Online Job Postings



Percent of total online Job Postings for Production Occupations, Lightcast™

Minimum Experience Level Requested in 2024 Online Job Postings



Percent of total online Job Postings for Production Occupations, Lightcast™

Employers also request certain qualifications in job ads, which are degrees, certifications, or licenses rather than specific skills. Qualifications often demonstrate knowledge and theoretical understanding, while skills are more about practical application and experience. Top requested qualifications include a *Valid Driver's License* and *Forklift Certification*.

Top Qualifications Requested in 2024 Production Postings	
Qualification	**Online Job Postings**
Valid Driver's License	1,380
Forklift Certification	363
Security Clearance	281
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	212
Wastewater Operator Certification	83
Food Safety Certification	68
American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Certified	63
10-Hour OSHA General Industry Card	61
Six Sigma Green Belt	50
Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) Certificate	45

Source: Lightcast™

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